

Isabel Province Youth Policy

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A PREFACE

Young people in Isabel Province already bestowed with beautiful, sea resources, fertile land, cultures and customs, less population and other things.

However, all these are declining at alarming rate while the population increase dramatically, which becomes a threat to the future of our young people. Young people encounter new changes and challenges in their transitional period, especially from their childhood to adulthood. These changes come about through increasing access to education, training, migration and western influences pondering our traditional life-style. Young people should now take stock what is happening within our sphere.

In year 2005, the Youth Office established the first draft Youth Policy with its Action Plan, where resourceful persons from different sector involved. The desire to have these two documents finally put in place for action came about during the Isabel Youth Parliament held at the Provincial Capital, Buala 2007.

Now having our own Policy with its Action Plan is another thing, while the implementation of it must be seriously taken onboard by all young people. I firmly believe that the Isabel Youth Policy with its Action Plan's aspiration can be achieved through strengthening effective partnership through enhancing better working environment where all stakeholders will come together with the Provincial and the National Government under Youth Department or Youth Division to address Youth issues in much higher degree of benefits to young people.

This Youth Policy with its Action Plan will be the road map for all young people in Isabel Province from 2009 and beyond. It is my sincere hope also that all young people will welcome the production of these two documents as a beginning of another era in the history for Youth development in Isabel Province and Solomon Islands.

Lastly, I would like to wish all young people a very bright and prosperous future.

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Provincial Minister for Community Affairs
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B. INTRODUCTION

1) *Background and purpose/rationale*

Santa Isabel is one of the nine Provinces in the Solomon Islands. Isabel comprises of the Islands of Isabel, San Jorge, Barora Fa and Barora Ite, with a total population of 20,421, based on the 1999 census, which represents 5% of the country's population. The dependency ratio is 46.4 whilst sex ratio is 104.3 males to 100 females.

The Island is of volcanic origin and consists of steep hills and mountains dissected by several rivers. The Province is vulnerable to coastal flooding and Tropical Cyclone, landslides, river flooding and drought. Most villages are located along the coast. Although the Province has a land area of the 4,156 sq.km, only 2.3% are classified as Agriculture Opportunity Areas.

About 97.8% of the population practiced subsistence agriculture and the main crops grown are taro, potato, yam, pana betel nut and pineapple. Of the 97.8%, only about 40% have access to market. The working population (14 years and over) totals to 12,381, which represents 61% of the Isabel total population. About 76% of land is customary and 26% is alienated land.

2) *Definition of Youth*

This policy defines youth as young male and female in the 12 – 30 years of age group. The youth definition although defers from that of the National Youth Policy, reflects the unique differences as experience in Isabel Province. For practical purposes, therefore this policy will be flexible to accommodate boys and girls less than 12 years and men and women over 30 years who may go through similar circumstances.

3) *Youth Profile*

Youth Development in Isabel began around 80's and has been centered round the churches and it was then that the Diocese of Ysabel (DOY) formed the Team Ministry at Tasia. Seeing it is centered round the church, its activities are church oriented. Then the DOY moved further and established Youth Ministry and employed a Youth Coordinator.

In the Provincial level however, Youth related matters, were dealt with on an ad-hoc basis by ad-hoc committees and it was continued to be in that scenario till 2002, where the Province established the Youth and Cultural Affairs Department and employed a full time coordinator.

Provincial Youth Coordinator, although an officer administering the office, it continued to work closely with the Diocesan Youth Coordinator in developing and implementing of the National Youth Policy.

The common issues impinging on the lives of young males and females in Isabel Province include:-

- Substance Abuse
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Single Parent
- Lack of employment opportunity
- Population Growth
- Less recognition from elders and chiefs
- Violation of Basic Human Rights by parents and caregivers
- Lack of understanding of Human Rights by young people
- Sexual Abuse/ child abuse/ incest
- Law and order and security
- Education and Youth training
- Culture and tradition
- Gender
- Environment and Natural resources management

4. *Background to the Development of Youth Services in the Province*

Traditionally Youth was non-existence in Isabel Province. Young males and females are merged into adult world at an early age through participation. Although Youth Affairs emerged as a national issue in the Government agenda in the mid 70's, it was not until the mid 80's that the Youth Affairs was introduced into the Provincial Government agenda. Prior to the above, Youth Development was more prevalent within the educational institutions run by the Churches. E.g. Scouts, Girl Guides. The Churches, in particular the DOY in recognition of the existence of young males and females formulated church based programs including Sunday School, Bible Studies, critical and functional literacy. The Provincial Government is therefore committed to establish, finance and facilitate the newly established Isabel Youth Council (IYC).

5. *Principles and Values underlying the Provincial Youth Policy*

The Isabel Provincial Youth Policy acknowledges the principles and values as stipulated in the National Constitution of the Solomon Islands and the National Youth Policy.

C) VISION STATEMENT

The Youth Policy recognizes young males and females as basis of community and seeks to develop their optimum potential and promote their active participation in the socio-economic development and cultural sphere in Isabel.

D) OBJECTIVES

1. To raise educational awareness to our young people and community the existence of “Youth” in Isabel Province.
2. To represent the views and aspirations of young people at both Provincial and National Forums.
3. To revive, strengthen and promote the culture and tradition of Isabel.
4. To develop and maintain the legal and administrative framework of youth development in the Province.
5. To encourage and promote youth work in collaboration with voluntary organizations and community youth volunteers.
6. To promote safe and supportive family and community environment in which young people are protected from violence, neglect and discrimination.
7. To encourage, support and develop potential of young people to participate in developing the socio-economic well being of Isabel.
8. To promote gender sensitization in all areas of youth development.
9. To ensure young people are adequately trained with skills that will enable them to offer valuable services to the communities and the Province.
10. To identify and secure resources at village, Provincial, National and International levels to enhance the promotion of youth development in Isabel.
11. To promote healthy life style amongst youth, with special focus on dangers of alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and other social problems through family life education.
12. To identify our natural resources and encourage Environment Management and sustainable development.
13. To provide employment opportunities at village level in which will help them to become responsible self-reliant members in the communities.

E) RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN

1. *The Isabel Provincial Youth Policy recognize the rights of young women and men founded on the sanctity of human life and dignity as follows:-*

- The rights of the child as stipulated in the Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- The freedom of expression and to form association lawfully of their own.
- The right of protection from any forms of exploitation, discrimination and abuse.
- The right to learn, associate and participate in cultural, religious and other activities which may have benefits in return.
- Equal right of access to usage of community properties and resources.
- Right to have equal share of the Provinces' natural resources.
- The right to good parental care.
- The right to good health.
- Access to education, training, employment, legal services and recreation.
- The right in making decision on issues affecting them.

2. *The Isabel Provincial Youth Policy recognizes the duty of all Isabel Youth to make an active role and positive contribution to the development of their communities and the State by having the following responsibilities and obligations to:*

- Respect every member of the community, those in authority, for children and the disadvantaged.
- Protect and conserve the environment for future generation.
- Respect Senior Citizens of the Province.
- Honor and respect the Isabel Province Symbols.
- Learn well from each other as well as parents, community members and teachers.

- Uphold the moral value of our society's culture and the values and principles of Christianity.
- Learn to value cultural history traditions to pass on to their children.
- Learn to develop talents and skills, motivation and confidence to be self-reliant.
- Take good care of themselves and others when engaged in risk behavior such as drinking beer, smoking and other means of risk factors.
- Promote the Isabel Provincial Youth Policy by making them to become part of its implementation mechanism.

3. *The Isabel Provincial Youth Policy recognizes the important role of adults in guiding the youth as follows:-*

- Leaders and adults are role models for young people.
- Provide for the physical, social, mental, spiritual moral and economic well being of the youth.
- Support youth in all development programmes.
- Accept youth, not only in respect to their potential to be of service to the community but also with regard to their difference and particular need.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment where young people interact, learn and develop their programmes effectively.

F) KEY STRATEGIES

1. *Training*

- a) Employ a full time training coordinator and officer.
- b) Identify training needs for young people in the communities
- c) Formulate and organize training programs at village and Provincial levels.
- d) Monitor and evaluate training achievements at all levels.

2. *Religious*

- a) Ensure that a religious and its affairs are enriched per see.

- b) Facilitate the current religious based programmes and activities of young people in the community.
- c) Encourage ecumenical relationship and worship between churches in the efforts to promote youth development.
- d) Establish adequate structural skills amongst youth in organization.

3. Political

- a) Organize political awareness raising campaign where and when necessary.
- b) Encourage youth active participation in political affairs.
- c) Facilitate youth affairs forum in politics.
- d) Reorganize and protect the rights of youth in political development.

4. Economical

- a) Establish a provincial youth fund for youth economical development projects.
- b) Secure funds from local, national and international levels for youth development and entrepreneurship.
- c) Ensure active participation of youths in partnership with their communities in the promotion of Saving Club scheme.
- d) Locate, secure and establish market outlets for locally produced products.
- e) Any youth project that is provided for by council must have a strong sense of ownership and responsibilities.

5. Financial

- a) Financial assistance will be sought from National Government, Isabel Provincial Government and the Diocese through annual grant for youth programmes and activities.
- b) Establish a youth service scheme to involve registered youth groups in income generating projects.
- c) Encourage the affiliation of youth groups to Area Youth Forum who shall then be subscribed to Isabel Youth Council.
- d) May address and support any self-help fundraising activities by any Area Youths in the Province.
- e) May organize basic financial management training in the fight for accountability and transparency in the Province.

6. Cultural

- a) Revive and promote the tradition of Isabel.
- b) Promote peoples' cultural practices, values and norms through arts and music.
- c) Organize a bi-annual cultural fester at the Provincial level.

- d) Ensure the advancement of cultural exchange between areas and Provinces.
- e) Youth may actively involve in protecting our original culture and artifacts based on the norms and values in Isabel Province.
- f) Youths are encouraged to participate fully in traditional training and learning.

7. Social

- a) Participate in organizing leisure activities in remote areas.
- b) Identify and encourage traditionally based and borrowed leisured activities.
- c) Encouraged to establish or develop girl guides, boys and girls brigades, pathfinders or scouts to youth in the Province.

8. Health

- a) Take active roles in raising awareness to young people
- b) Inform and train youths in essential health and life skills to promote and protect healthy life styles in the communities.
- c) Health promotion programme to promote mental health and self-esteem and protect young people from adverse effects of risk behaviors such as substance use, tobacco smoking, alcohol early sex and violence.

9. Law and Order

- a) Promote law and order in schools, villages and in youth organizations.
- b) Encourage and participate in training programmes that are geared towards civil consciousness and civil obedience.

10. Family Issues and Focus

- a) Training programmes on counseling skills for youth leaders, clergy and village leaders.
- b) Raise awareness on child abuse.
- c) Raise awareness on domestic violence.
- d) Promote, initiate and establish preventative training programmes for proactive and effective communication for families (parents and children)

G) PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS

The Provincial Youth Policy is intended for all young women and men in Isabel particularly on the following priority target groups.

1. Rural Youth

This Policy encourage that priority attention be directed to the development of the rural youth by facilitating access to skill development training, self employment and non-cash employment and development of social and sport programmes.

Special attention will be given to registered youth groups who are affiliated to Isabel Youth Council.

2. School Drop Out

This phrase refers to school leavers of primary and secondary and may also apply to tertiary students. The Policy encourages the establishment of greater networking of information dissemination outlets to encourage and assist school drop outs. As such more venues for skill job training be available, as well as non-formal training especially in leadership skills and roles be seen at all levels.

3. Students

The Policy aims to encourage Isabel Education Authority to aim of serving all students on an equal gender basis.

That they are given every opportunity to learn with special provisions on comfortable learning environment, better facilities, qualified teachers, enough supplies of materials and special treatment to unable parents.

4. Young People with Disabilities

That youths with disabilities be part of the youth development thus its aims to facilitate a day where they can participate in sports, music and arts as well as skill training.

5. Alcohol and Drug Users

This Policy encourages the continued efforts in raising awareness on dangers of drugs and alcohol use.

6. Unemployed young women and men

The context refers to young people not engaged in any cash based employment, self-employment and non-cash payment.

Young people must be encouraged to become involved in the socio-economic surrounding in which they live. Adult enhancement training programmes such as critical and functional literacy are essential to be included into non-formal education program with special target on single parents and marginalized youths.

7. *Neglected Youths*

Neglected Youths in the context of this policy refers to children who are not housed in parents' or relatives' homes.

The shift to cash economy is putting pressure on the families of the marginalized youth which may result in sexual and physical abuse and substance abuse by the youth.

H) IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

This document seeks to provide the basis for integrated and collaborative efforts by all Government agencies impinging on youth and the efforts of non-government organization and the churches committed to youth development.

The implementation of this policy will indeed attract training of youth workers, churches, schools, NGOs and young people. This is to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of the policy goals and objectives is achieved.

Therefore the implementation mechanisms include the following:-

- Youth Affairs – to coordinate the efforts and initiatives of the Provincial Government in implementing the policy. It will also maintain regular consultation with all government Departments, churches, NGOs and other Youth Organizations.
- The Isabel Youth Council – will oversee the implementation of the policy and the programmes outline in the Isabel Provincial Youth Action Plan.
- Mechanism to facilitate consultation and participation by young people include:-
 - i) Area Youth Forums (established under Ward)
 - ii) Youth Associations (Village Youth Groups)

- Isabel Provincial Youth Forum – as an option to set up to coordinate and collaborate on policies and youth programmes of all stakeholders including youth organization/groups.

The Isabel Provincial Youth Policy will be reviewed every five (5) years to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs and aspiration of young people in Isabel.

I) **CONCLUSION**

Youth today have rights and duties that are more complex than those of many other previous generations. They live in a society which is beset by constant changes with shifting ground and increasing number of variables. As such, the Isabel Provincial Youth Policy has not fully covered the potentials that are available to youth and the general population. This document is seen only as a framework to help – the Province, NGOs Chiefs, Churches, Adults and Young people to facilitate and assist our young people to be capable of taking up their places in our society.

It is essential to constantly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy so that it can be reviewed to meet the changing needs and aspiration of our young people.

REFERENCES

1. United Nation Development Reports.
2. Solomon Islands National Youth Policy.
3. Pacific Human Development Report.
4. Commonwealth Handbook on Formulating and Implementing of National Youth Policy.

Acknowledgements

The Youth Policy with its Action Plan was produced through the visions, skills and knowledge and hard work of many dedicated people and organizations. This Project has brought together representatives from various sectors in Isabel Province and the Solomon Islands.

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